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ABSTRACT

Food production plays a central role in every national economy. In the United States, the family farm system of agriculture has added special symbolic weight to this economic role. The national debate over appropriate agricultural policies now includes more interested parties than ever before. Environmentalists, consumer advocates, taxpayers, farmers, and agribusinesses all claim a stake in determining who benefits from and who pays for government farm programs. This publication explores the U.S. agricultural economy and its relationship to government policies, the public's environmental concerns and consumer interests. How to mesh farm sector health with other important national goals is a key question for the 1990s and beyond. Topics discussed include: (1) "U.S. Agricultural Policy"; (2) "The Human Dimension"; (3) "The Environmental Dimension"; (4) "Looking Toward the Future"; and, of specific interest to educators, (5) "Citizen Education in Your Community." A list of "Citizen Activity Guidelines" and a list of resources (publications and organizations) are appended. (CW)

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